

VIA MEDIA is the newsletter of Anglicans Together Inc, Sydney Australia.

The title is 'borrowed' from Anglican Church Reformers who sought to walk 'the middle way'.

Who we are

Anglicans Together includes a diverse membership of people from within the Anglican Diocese of Sydney who seek to work together in order to maintain, foster and develop our common life in the Diocese and wider Anglican Communion. We are a broad group with a diversity of beliefs and practices, reflective of our Anglican Church.

We promote unity and co-operation with one another and encourage one another in mission.



The Rev'd Dr Max Wood
President, Anglicans Together Sydney

Easter Blessings and welcome to this second edition of our rebranded Anglicans Together newsletter – *Via Media*.

We are calling this edition our "May 2020 COVID-19" edition. Every article and notice in this edition in some way reflects the challenges and "opportunities" created by these very strange times that we have all endured over recent weeks and months.

One major and obvious challenge and opportunity has been how we gather and worship as communities of faith amidst COVID-19 restrictions, a challenge which is not going away any time soon, with our Diocese just recently advising that "worship online" will continue through at least "Step 1" and "Step 2" of the easing of restrictions in New South Wales. The two focus essays in this edition by our Archbishop of Sydney, The Most Reverend Dr Glenn Davies and The Rev'd Dr Brian Douglas, Senior Lecturer in Theology at Charles Sturt University, offer perspectives on our ability to participate in Holy Communion (or Eucharist) virtually and the nature of such participation.

We then document some accounts of virtual worship from two of our member Parishes – Hunters Hill and Christ Church St Laurence – and then conclude with the second installment of "*Getting to Know the Anglicans Together Committee*" with contributions by Paula Turner and Steff Fenton.

We do hope you enjoy this edition of *Via Media* and special thanks to Callum Close for editing this edition.

The Rev'd Dr Max Wood,
President, Anglicans Together Sydney



HOLY COMMUNION IN A CORONAVIRUS WORLD

The Right Rev'd Dr Glenn N. Davies, Archbishop of Sydney

The Lord's Supper is a sacred meal for Christians. It expresses our fellowship within the body of Christ, both among fellow members of Christ's body, and also with the head of that body, our risen Lord.

Three elements of the Lord's Supper are found in Paul's instructions to the Corinthians:

- **Communion:** a participation in Christ's body and his blood (1 Corinthians 10:16)
- **Remembrance:** 'Do this in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:24)
- **Proclamation:** we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (1 Corinthians 11:26)

Paul rebuked the Corinthians because they had abused the Lord's Supper. Their conduct failed to recognise the corporate nature of the meal and resulted in divisions among the assembly. He therefore encouraged them to examine themselves and not to eat or drink in an unworthy manner. They needed to discern the body when participating, lest they bring judgment on themselves. This discernment, of course, is recognising the body of Christ gathered, because our participation is a corporate activity, not an individual activity.

For that reason, the rubrics in the *Book of Common Prayer* state that at least three persons should communicate with the priest. However, for the 'Communion of the Sick', the number is reduced to two persons, and furthermore, 'in time of the plague, sweat, or such other like contagious times of sickness or diseases' when none other can join, the number may be reduced to one plus the minister.

Therefore, what are we to do in the current circumstances? We cannot meet together in church, as we used to. We cannot come to the Lord's Table, as we used to. How do we fulfil our Lord's command: 'Do this in remembrance of me'?

When I first addressed Sydney Anglicans by video, in the wake of COVID-19, I encouraged us all to be creative and flexible, as we sought to obey the Government's guidelines restricting the number of people meeting indoors and outdoors. Since then, we now find ourselves unable to meet physically at all for public worship and in groups of no more than two in public or private gatherings (other than family households).

Fortunately, unlike the Spanish Flu 100 years ago, we have technology to aid us.



Cathedral Church Service 5 APRIL 2020 Replay

Following the closure of all religious services to the public, many of our churches have produced pre-recorded videos of sermons or live streamed their services so that the word of God continue to go forth via the internet to many people – churchgoers and non-churchgoers alike.

Yet how do we participate in the Lord's Supper in these restricted times?

Just as Cranmer allowed improvisation in time of pestilence and plague in the sixteenth century, we need to improvise in the wake of this pandemic of the twenty-first century. Home communions are clearly an option, where the minister visits the housebound. However, with guidelines for social distancing and fears of contamination, let alone the time constraints upon ministers of the gospel, this may not be sustainable.



Therefore, since we are now live-streaming our services, I see no reason why we could not broadcast a minister celebrating the Lord's Supper with the customary bread and wine. Members of the parish could participate in their own homes via the internet, consuming their own bread and wine, in accordance with our Lord's command.

Following the service on screen, as led by the minister, members of a household could actively share in the communion, the remembrance and the proclamation of our Lord's death. Their fellowship with the body of Christ would be no less spiritual and no less real.

We must not fall into the erroneous mindset of thinking that consecration of the elements is only valid for us if we are physically present to consume them, as if there were magic in the hands of the minister. Cranmer's prayer of consecration was a prayer offered to God, that the elements of bread and wine would become *for us*, the body and blood of our Lord. That is, their signification was no longer *mere* bread and wine (as a wedding ring is not *merely* a piece of precious metal).

As we hear this prayer said by the minister, the Holy Spirit, in accordance with God's promises to feed his flock, is the one who communicates to us the spiritual benefits of eating the body of Christ and drinking his blood. We may not be physically present with the church gathered on earth, but we are always present with heavenly assembly (Hebrews 12: 22-24; Ephesians 2:6).



Of course, some people may be more isolated and have no access to the internet for live streaming. How can they be nourished in their Christian faith? My answer is to feed on God's word. Keep reading, meditating and praying over God's word that he may bring refreshment to your soul.

As for observing our Lord's command, your reading of 1 Corinthians 11 could easily be used with your own bread and wine in these times of extremity, though it would be preferable to share with one close Christian friend or some family members. It would not be an Anglican service, which requires the presence of an ordained minister, but it would be a Christian service, in accordance with Jesus' invitation to 'do this in remembrance of me.'

The benefits of the Lord's Supper are not dependent upon any priest, but upon the promises of God's Word. Elijah was prevented from celebrating the Passover for more than two years of extremity, but he fed on the Lord's word, accompanied by the sustenance of water from the Brook Cherith and food delivered by ravens. An unusual time, not unlike Israel's forty years in the wilderness, where they ate the 'spiritual' food and drank the 'spiritual' water from the rock, which was Christ (1 Corinthians 10:3-4), while the ordinary means of grace in circumcision and Passover were suspended.

Let me leave you with one final rubric of the *Book of Common Prayers'* Service for the 'Communion of the Sick' (in slightly updated language):

But if anyone, either by reason of extremity of sickness, or for want of warning in due time to the Minister, or for lack of company to receive with the Minister, or by any other just impediment, do not receive the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood; the Minister shall instruct them, that if they do truly repent of their sins, and steadfastly believe that Jesus Christ has suffered death upon the Cross for them, and shed his Blood for their redemption; earnestly remembering the benefits they have thereby, and giving him hearty thanks therefore; that person does eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ profitably to their soul's health, although they do not receive the Sacrament with their mouth.

I also encourage you to read and meditate on the words of Jesus, the bread of life, as recorded in John 6:22-71, noting St Augustine's comment on this passage: 'Believe and you have eaten already.'

Glenn N. Davies
Archbishop of Sydney
31 March, 2020



Eucharist and Luncheon Postponement

As previously advised, we have had to postpone our scheduled Anglicans Together Eucharist and Luncheon until (we hope) later this year or early next year due to restrictions associated with COVID-19.

We will update you as soon as we have new details regarding these events.



A 'VIRTUAL' EUCHARIST IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC: BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL & CONSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES

The Rev'd Dr Brian Douglas

Context and Practical Concerns

In a time of global pandemic, coronavirus has changed the way that many people live and work in the world. People have begun to attend meetings in virtual mode using various technologies which allow people to see and hear one another but be in separate places at the same time without any physical connection. Families are no longer able to meet in person and so the use of the telephone, social media and live streaming have become a substitute for physical family gatherings. This new form of meeting connects people by virtual means without being in the same place at the same time.

In such a time of global pandemic the church has made excellent use of streaming to connect people of faith with one another. Groups have continued to meet by virtual means and services have been conducted in one place and streamed to another place without people being physically together. This has provided a source of comfort and spiritual nourishment for many in times when people cannot meet in a physical manner in churches.

Prayer can be prayed, the Scriptures can be read and expounded, music can be used and people can be encouraged and spiritually nourished. Some have suggested that the Eucharist or Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper can also be live streamed as well and become a 'virtual' Eucharist.

This paper considers the biblical, theological and constitutional perspectives of such a proposal in the Anglican Church of Australia. Comments are made here in a spirit of seeking biblical, theological and constitutional perspectives on the proposal that clergy and people share the Eucharist, Holy Communion or Lord's Supper together using electronic means to create what might be called a 'virtual' Eucharist in times of global pandemic where gathering together is not allowed or possible.

A 'virtual' Eucharist in the Anglican Church of Australia would involve a clergy person with bread and wine in one place, saying the Thanksgiving or consecration prayer over the bread and wine in that place, at the same time that people are physically separated from the priest and in their homes also having and consuming another set of bread and wine physically present in their particular place.

People in their own homes would break, distribute and consume their bread and wine after the priest has said the words of thanksgiving or consecration over bread and wine in another place on the understanding that the effect of the Thanksgiving or consecration in one place is operative in another place at the same time.

A number of immediate practical concerns with important theological consequences arise:

- While the consecration is in one place and with one set of bread and wine, the breaking and distribution is in another place with another set of bread and wine, thus breaking the unity of the one celebration in a gathered community;
- The concept of 'virtual' trades on the notion of equivalence where none really exists. Bread and wine in one place are not equivalent to bread and wine in another place, since priestly consecration is not operative in any real way in the homes of people accessing a service via electronic means;
- The President of the Eucharist has no idea who his/her virtual congregation is, nor does the President know if any of them need reconciling or even excommunicating. This takes away the pastoral responsibility in presiding;
- The President of the Eucharist has no idea what bread and wine are to be viewed by the virtual congregation as 'consecrated' and therefore no idea of the treatment of or responsibility for the 'remains';
- Any use of a 'virtual' Eucharist during time of global pandemic has the potential, when times are better, to leave people on Sunday, atomized in their homes, uncommitted to an actual fellowship;
- If Presidential actions come over the internet into a home, the question could be asked do they need to come from an absolutely contemporary celebration of the Eucharist, or would a repeat on the television do? Could a video from the past be used? Do we need present-day Presidents at all if we have electronic Presidents?

Underlying the above concerns are some weighty matters of a biblical, theological and constitutional kind. These are considered below in the hope that the inquiry may be of assistance as the question of a 'virtual' Eucharist.

A Biblical Perspective



The biblical witness in the three synoptic accounts of the Last Supper in Matthew 26:20-29, Mark 14:17-25 and Luke 22:14-20 as well as in the Pauline account in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 all agree that it was Jesus who took the bread and wine, gave thanks over it, broke the bread and then distributed it to the disciples.

It is clear in the synoptic accounts that it is Jesus who does the taking, giving thanks, breaking and distributing. Any theology of consecration must take into account

Jesus' actions of taking, thanking, breaking and giving in imitation of him in subsequent celebrations of the Eucharist. A 'virtual' Eucharist does not imitate the actions of Jesus in that it does not allow the breaking or the giving or distribution of the elements in homes by the priest in imitation of Jesus but only the taking and thanking by the priest in another place.

The elements in the people's house and which they consume are clearly different from the elements that the priest takes, over which he or she gives thanks, breaks and distributes. It is the total action as a unity that is important and not merely some parts of that unity. To leave out the breaking and distributing of the one eucharistic action suggests that a set of words said by a priest in another place is the important aspect of consecration. This does not coincide with the biblical witness nor does it follow the example of Jesus in its completeness.

Thomas Cranmer in the English Reformation could see this point clearly. He says in his Answer to Gardiner, for example, in discussing the difference between a priest and a layperson that the: 'Difference that is between the priest and the layman in this matter is only in the ministration; that the priest, as a common minister of the church, doth minister and distribute the Lord's Supper unto other, and other receive it at his hand.'

By 'ministration' Cranmer means 'distribution' which is then received by people. Further Cranmer says that: 'Wherefore the ordinance of Christ ought to be followed: the priest to minister the sacrament to the people.' Cranmer had clearly studied the biblical evidence and was keen to assert that the priest should imitate the actions of Jesus, not only taking, giving thanks and breaking but also ministering 'at his [that is the priest's] hand' to the people.

Cranmer saw the actions of the Eucharist as inclusive of all the dominical actions and would seemingly have not been prepared to separate the breaking or the distribution or the ministration from the other actions. A 'virtual' Eucharist separates the actions and therefore destroys the unity of the eucharistic action. It goes against the biblical evidence of the synoptic gospels and the writings of Thomas Cranmer as he interpreted those gospels.

It is difficult to understand why anyone who values the biblical and Reformation evidence would wish to use a form of the Eucharist that so clearly goes against the biblical witness and the Reformation writings of Thomas Cranmer.

A Theological Perspective



By separating the breaking and distribution from the taking and giving thanks, a virtual Eucharist suggests that there is a set of words that effects the consecration and that breaking and distribution is not part of the consecration. To argue in this way dismantles any coherent notion of eucharistic symbolism and suggests a form of sacerdotalism that is reminiscent of the worst abuses of the Medieval church and against which the Reformers of the sixteenth century so rightly objected.

The power of the symbol and the symbolic act of breaking and distributing is replaced by priestly words. Modern liturgical practice suggests that it is the whole of the eucharistic action that effects consecration as a unity and not just words said by a priest. It is the action of the priest and people gathered around the same table that are mutually involved in the consecration of the elements and not the words and actions of the priest alone.

This is recognised by the Anglo-Catholic liturgist Dom Gregory Dix in his famous book *The Shape of the Liturgy*, where he emphasises the four-fold shape of the eucharistic action: taking, thanking, breaking and giving as a unity of action in imitation of the action of our Lord. In a virtual Eucharist this unity of action cannot be the case because of the separation and the multiple sets of elements without the breaking and distributing carried out by the priest in people homes in imitation of the actions of our Lord, destroys the unity of the eucharistic action.

The question of what is consecration is central here to any understanding of sacramental theology. Is consecration about taking, thanking, breaking and distributing any set of bread and wine or is it taking, thanking and distributing a particular bread and wine as a unified action, that is, of the bread and wine over which the priest says the words of thanksgiving or consecration?

Is consecration about only taking and thanking or does it involve all four actions of taking, thanking, breaking and distributing? It is suggested that in answer to both questions it is the latter and not the former.

A 'virtual' Eucharist therefore presents an impaired, defective and incomplete theology of consecration. What it creates is a propositional or individualist sacramental theology which leads to the dismantling of the wider notion of sacramental action and efficacy in the church and the establishment of a congregationalist ecclesiology where the focus is centred on the local, both in the sacerdotal actions of the priest and in the breaking and distributing in homes, at the expense of the universal church.

Cranmer addresses this central question of consecration in his Defence of 1550. Here he says: 'Consecration is the separation of any thing from a profane and worldly use unto a spiritual and godly use. ... When common bread and wine be taken and severed from other bread and wine, to the use of the holy communion, that portion of bread and wine, although it be of the same substance that the other is from the which is severed, yet is now called consecrated or holy bread and wine.'

For Cranmer there is a clear distinction between the bread and wine that is consecrated by the priest and other bread and wine. While, according to Cranmer, the substance of the bread and wine is not changed by consecration, it is nonetheless by consecration 'severed from other bread and wine', which is of the same substance, but not of the same use or ministration.

In a 'virtual' Eucharist there are two classes of bread and wine: (a) that which is consecrated by the priest and thus severed from other bread and wine and then broken and ministered and (b) bread and wine which is common bread and wine for which the unity of the eucharistic action does not apply.

In a 'virtual' Eucharist people are being asked to believe that the bread and wine in their homes are also severed from common use although it has not had the taking by the priest, the direct thanking by the priest, the breaking by the priest or the ministration by the priest to the people.

Such a process breaks the unity of the eucharistic action and destroys the sacramental theology, creating a situation in which the words of consecration, institution and thanksgiving become 'magical' in and of themselves, emphasising the role of the priest at the expense of the ecclesial nature of the Eucharist.

This creates a deception in the eucharistic action which destroys the ecclesial aspect of sacramental theology at the expense of the Christological. The very issue of ecclesial sharing is therefore impaired by the emphasis on priestly words, thus destroying the fellowship a 'virtual' Eucharist was attempting to create.

The result is that the deception has scant regard for right teaching of the faithful and fits well with the notion of rationalised magic in a postmodern culture. The 'virtual' Eucharist works against the systematisation of sacramental theology within the wider ecclesial structure and suggests that the validity of the sacramental action can be diffused to the local level alone without reference to the wider ecclesial structure.

The use of a 'virtual' Eucharist raises the theological question of why not a 'virtual' baptism, or a 'virtual' confirmation or a 'virtual' ordination. In a virtual confirmation or ordination can the laying

on of hands be effected across the internet or by another set of hands present in the place where the confirmer or ordinand is, being placed on the head of the person.

This relates to the matter of the sacrament. In baptism the matter is the water and the signing, while in confirmation and ordination the matter is the laying on of hands. In the Eucharist the matter is the bread and wine and what the priest does with them.

The ridiculous could apply here and an outline of the bishop's hands could be sent in the mail and placed on the person's head as they are confirmed or ordained. This is the same logic that applies to a 'virtual' Eucharist where an alternative matter is used.

I doubt that any bishop would want to confirm or ordain by 'virtual' means, so why implement a 'virtual' Eucharist. Such a situation has significant political and ecclesial consequences which permit a de facto sacrament which is really adiaphora and which in turn creates conditions for future 'virtual' communion to accompany the current realignments of the Anglican Church in any situation of cross border ecclesial networks. The fluidity of a 'virtual' church polity has no limits of order and creates difficulties for existing structures within the Anglican Communion.

All of the above really depends on the nature of consecration. Does consecration change the nature or the use of the bread and wine? Cranmer considered that consecration severs ordinary bread and wine from common use. Other theologians over the ages have argued that consecration changes the nature of the bread and wine so that the bread and wine following consecration has a heightened efficacy.

Nicholas Ridley argued 'the bread to be converted and turned into the flesh of Christ; but not by transubstantiation, but by sacramental converting and turning.' Lancelot Andrewes speaks of 'a kind of hypostatical union of the sign and the thing signified, so united together as are the two natures of Christ ... but each nature remaineth still full and whole in its own kind.'

Jeremy Taylor argues that: 'The doctrine of the church of England, and generally of the protestants, ... is, - that after the minister of the holy mysteries hath rightly prayed, and blessed or consecrated the bread and the wine, the symbols become changed into the body and blood of Christ, after a sacramental, that is, in a spiritual real manner: so that all that worthily communicate, do by faith receive Christ, really, effectually, to all the purposes of his passion.'

In modern times Rowan Williams speaks of presenting the death of Jesus in new solidarities (such as bread and wine) where 'the material elements of bread and wine are to be made holy by the prayer that associates them with the flesh and blood of Jesus' which is 'not simply a natural or obvious unity.' For Williams this unity 'is effected or uncovered by a particular act, a particular word in the history of revelation. Jesus "passes over" in the symbolic forms of his own word and gestures, a transition into the vulnerable and inactive forms of the inanimate world.

By resigning himself into the signs of food and drink, putting himself into the hands of other agents, he signifies his forthcoming helplessness and death. He announces his death by "signing" himself as a thing, to be handled and consumed.' If this idea of a change is accepted then a specific consecration is needed for that 'change' to occur as it cannot be merely a subjective decision by faithful recipients which determines what the bread and wine is on the table and which determines that it is consecrated or not.

VIA MEDIA MAY 2020

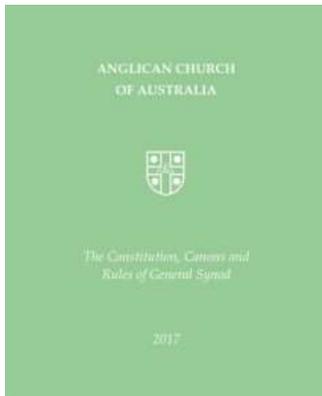
If the idea of change in the bread and wine is denied and the emphasis is on the faith of the recipient alone then there appears to be, in the case of bread and wine in homes as opposed to that in the place where the priest is, a significant departure from the theology presented by

Archbishop Cranmer and in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, as well as other modern prayer books such as *An Australian Prayer* of 1978 and *A Prayer Book for Australia* of 1995.

All these prayer books envisage a specific consecration by a priest in one place which involves the physical taking, thanking, breaking and distributing of the bread and wine in one place by the priest and people in that one place. It is the faith of the recipients in the one physical place that is important in relation to the bread and wine.

To allow people in a separate place from the actual consecration to consider any bread and wine to be consecrated on the basis of their faith is a significant departure from Anglican polity and one which obviates the need for Presidents, ordered sacraments and indeed the gathered church.

A Constitutional Perspective



The Anglican Church of Australia is constituted by the 1962 Constitution. In that Constitution the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, together with the 39 Articles, is set as 'the standard of doctrine and worship' for the Anglican Church of Australia. Any deviation from that standard needs to be in harmony with the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. This is a point which Archbishop Donald Robinson of Sydney made many times.

The publication of *An Australian Prayer Book* in 1978 and *A Prayer Book for Australia* in 1995 were made possible because they were seen as conforming to the standard of worship and doctrine in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer.

The 1662 Book of Common Prayer in the Prayer of Consecration follows the pattern set out by Thomas Cranmer in the 1549 and 1552 and the subsequent 1603 editions of the Book of Common Prayer, where the priest takes the bread and wine in his/her hands, gives thanks over them, breaks the bread and then distributes them to the people.

In 1662 this was made even clearer by the revisers through the addition of the rubrics called 'the manual acts', that is rubrics directing the priest to do certain things with and in the presence of the bread and wine. It is clear in the rubrics set out in the Prayer of Consecration known as the manual acts, that the intention of the revisers in 1662 was that it was the bread and wine which the priest takes and for which he/she gives thanks and breaks, which is subsequently distributed or ministered to the people.

The rubric which follows the Prayer of Consecration states: 'Then shall the Minister first receive the Communion in both kinds himself, and then proceed to deliver the same to the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, in like manner, (if any be present,) and after that to the people also in order, into their hands, all meekly kneeling.'

A 'virtual' Eucharist does not follow the rubrics since the priest does not take the bread and wine in the houses of people in his/her hands, nor does the priest give thanks over it directly, except by virtual means, nor does the priest break it or distribute it.

VIA MEDIA MAY 2020

Clearly this bread and wine which the priest consecrates is not that bread and wine distributed to the people, nor is it distributed 'into their hands' as the rubric directs. In a 'virtual' Eucharist the procedure does not conform with the rubrics of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer and so it could be argued that such a procedure does not conform to that prayer book as the standard of

doctrine and worship for the Anglican Church of Australia under the terms which the Constitution requires.

Possible Alternatives

The taking of consecrated bread and wine to those who cannot attend the Eucharist in person is an ancient act of the Church, attested by Justin Martyr around the year 150 of the common era in his First Apology where the direction is given that deacons should take the consecrated bread and wine to those who are sick.

This practice is followed by some within the Anglican Communion and is suggested in some prayer books (e.g. The Episcopal Church of the United States of America) and in the failed 1928 Book of Common Prayer. There are others in the Anglican Communion who object to this practice on theological grounds related to the lasting presence of Christ in the elements and that the 39 Articles direct that Christ did not specifically allow the carrying around of the consecrated elements. It is strange therefore that a 'virtual' Eucharist is advocated by those who deny the possibility of extended communion, despite the theological objections to that 'virtual' practice.

The logistical difficulties of supplying consecrated bread and wine to people isolated in their homes because of a global pandemic and the subsequent distancing requirements is recognised, but this does not deny that the possibility exists for some who do not have theological objections to the practice of reserved sacrament and extended communion, and that there may be a closer imitation in this method to the actions of Jesus than are found in a 'virtual' Eucharist.

It is also ancient habit of the Church to practise what is called spiritual communion. Augustine comments: 'Why make ready your teeth and your belly? Believe, and you have eaten' (Tractates on the Gospel of St John, 27.5).

This suggests that the benefits of communion can be had by spiritual eating and drinking on the basis of faith. It would therefore be possible for people to watch a Eucharist celebrated by a priest without the eating and drinking of bread and wine and to receive the benefits of communion by spiritual means. In times of pandemic such spiritual communion has a vital place for Anglicans.

This was recognised in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer in the service called The Communion of the Sick. Here a rubric declares:

But if a man, either by reason of extremity of sickness, or for want of warning in due time to the Curate, or for lack of company to receive with him, or by any other just impediment, do not receive the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood: the Curate shall instruct him that if he do truly repent him of his sins, and steadfastly believe that Jesus Christ hath suffered death upon the Cross for him, and shed his Blood for his redemption, earnestly remembering the benefits he hath thereby, and giving him hearty thanks therefore; he doth eat and drink the Body and Blood of Saviour Christ profitably to his soul's health, although he do not receive the Sacrament with his mouth.

VIA MEDIA MAY 2020

In modern times this practice of spiritual communion has been recognised and recommended by some church leaders.

The BCP specifically makes provision for private communion and this would still be possible for those in need or ill. In extreme circumstances, even in the time of disease, this practice could be followed with the appropriate and necessary caution of protection for both priest and communicant and with physical distancing.

Others in the present situation of disease advocate that we are in a period of sacramental fasting and that such a situation should persist so that we do not offend biblical, theological and constitutional principles established in the Anglican Church of Australia through the use of a 'virtual' Eucharist.

It is recognised that for many sacramental fasting is a difficult decision to make since it deprives them of the spiritual nourishment they receive from the Eucharist, but such people see this as preferable to the practice of a 'virtual' Eucharist and look to sacramental fasting as a spiritual discipline.

These comments are made as an attempt to raise for discussion and reflection what are important biblical, theological and constitutional matters that need to be seriously considered as we contemplate any use of a 'virtual' Eucharist.

The Rev'd Dr Brian Douglas
8 April, 2020.

Stories of Virtual Worship

The Anglican Parish of Hunter's Hill

Since 18th March our Parish has participated in various online services, however in truth some of our most important worship and interaction has been by phone with one another. That aside, the Rector has produced a weekly service that is put on our YouTube Channel, along with a link to the service booklet. It has been a steep learning curve for all, especially the Rector who films on his phone, and then edits and produces.



Initially services were only Morning Prayer, but from Palm Sunday, after multiple requests, included Holy Communion, which continues to take place for "High Days and Holy Days". Holy Communion is participated in "spiritually", and all services include the breaking open of the word and time for prayer or meditation.

The services have had to be adapted for online, and so some elements that we would include when gathered together are changed, removed, or only done from time to time. The Rector has sought to include as many people as possible, within the rules and in terms of care and safety, to be a part of leading aspects of the services. Seeing each other has been a wonderful blessing, and being able to enter into our sacred spaces has been a real gift.

The number of people watching has increased over the weeks, especially as Parishioners have become used to the technology, and some sharing services with friends. It has also been lovely

VIA MEDIA MAY 2020

to receive messages and comments from friends from overseas, including people we have never met before.

We also conduct Morning Prayer on Wednesday via Zoom. While lovely to see each other, trying to say responses together or sharing is not always easy. Possibly the most successful usage of Zoom has been to gather for morning tea together on a Sunday morning – it is lovely to see faces, and to share a laugh, tell stories, and see one another's homes.

The Rector has noted that this has been a most difficult time, and the level of time and skill required to maintain such a community is extremely high. Leading worship and preaching to an empty church is most difficult, spiritually and emotionally.

However, one of the great bonuses has been several people who have been unable to join us for worship due to frailty and age have been able to watch from home. Seeing a video of one of them singing along who has dementia, and a note of thanks from their child, makes it worth the effort.

The Reverend Michael Armstrong
Rector, Hunters Hill

The Parish of Christ Church St Laurence

Christ Church St Laurence (CCSL) is very fortunate to have a parishioner, who has the skills and dedication needed to set up the facility for live-streaming from the first Sunday after the lock down started. Fine tuning has continued but, from day one, every service has been very well received and appreciated by many.



Easter at CCSL moved from being a very active Holy Week up at Railway Square, with a visiting preacher (this year's was to have been from the UK), to on-line services on the major days, with the traditional liturgy maintained, but suitably adapted to streaming with a priest, a few choristers, organist, server and lay reader, all physically distanced. Adaptations included photos of the foot washing from past years on Maundy Thursday.

The empty Church for the Good Friday liturgy profoundly spoke of the sense of abandonment felt by Christ's followers. Easter Sunday service started with the lighting of the fire, representing the Light of Christ, which is normally part of the late Saturday night Easter service.

While the Rector must have been run ragged behind the scenes, for us, at home, in a quiet space, we experienced a Holy Week unlike any other; quiet, prayerful, reverent and deeply spiritual. To facilitate Sunday worship at home, weekly pew sheets are posted on CCSL's website which contain the readings for the day and the hymns. Connections to current and past services are at <https://www.ccsl.org.au/watch/>

CCSL's Sunday School has continued successfully using zoom technology, and other posted on-line resources. Parishioners are regularly reminded via email from the Rector that clergy continue the daily offices every day behind the locked church doors (morning and evening prayer

and daily masses) at which we are all upheld before God in prayer. We are encouraged to join in privately, reading the offices at home. A couple of Compline services have been streamed on a Wednesday night.

What has been astonishing is the reach of CCSL's streaming, which presumably other parishes are also finding. For example, while close to 300 "connections" (how many individuals are in each connection?) occur each Sunday morning for the 10:30am service, we know that hundreds more across the world join in during the ensuing week, linking to the stored video. The estimate of viewers on Easter Sunday was 5,000 people around the world.

Even Sunday School is being viewed around Australia and, amazingly, in other countries, including UK, Spain and USA!

It is wonderful that other Anglicans Together parishes in Sydney have been able to offer on-line services and other resources so that Sydney is not lacking in rich options for all in lock-down to continue to connect virtually to spiritual support and nourishment.

Have our parishes started something wonderful that will now change forever our connections with wider communities in and beyond Sydney, beyond Australia even? And have we the capacity now to continue to enrich the lives of our own ill or elderly parishioners who long to walk back through our church doors, joining the worshipping communities they so love?

This will need more sophisticated technology and thoughtful adaptation, once the churches are full of noisy people, but it would not surprise me if some new and powerful outreach will develop when "normality" resumes. And I like to think that our Anglicans Together parishes shared experiences show that Anglicanism as we know and love it is alive and well here in Sydney and beyond.

Lyn Bannerman

Getting to know the Anglicans Together Committee: Part 2

This month, our Secretary, Paula Turner and Committee Member, Steff Fenton, reveal something of themselves to us.



Paula Turner

1. Describe yourself in two sentences?

When faced with this question to answer I asked my family what their response would be. My youngest daughter said "you are all the words in the universe except for the bad ones," my eldest daughter said "you're a control freak" and my husband said "you're kind-hearted but obsessive." I would agree with all of the above.

2. What are you most missing during this time of physical distancing?

I really miss getting dressed up to go out and eat in a fancy restaurant but the thing I miss the most is chatting about nothing in particular with my girl friends, drinking tea and eating biscuits.

3. What are three things you are passionate about?

I shout very loudly at the TV when Wales is playing sport, I turn into a crazy woman if anyone wrongs my children and it's very important to me that proper procedures are followed. So, the country where I was born, my daughters and rules and regulations are three things that I'm passionate about.

4. Why are you involved in Anglicans Together/What do you hope will come from the work of AT?

I'm involved in Anglicans Together because I see it as an organisation which can bring people with different opinions together. Everyone's opinion is important regardless of whether you agree with it or not, and Anglicans Together allows all opinions to be heard. I hope the work of Anglicans Together will highlight what is relevant in the world today, respecting the past but ultimately looking towards the future.



Steff Fenton

1. Describe yourself in two sentences?

I'm a big people person, who has just started composting and baking sourdough at home. I spend my time studying an M.Div through Trinity College Theological School in Melbourne, Co-Chairing Equal Voices Sydney (an LGBTIQA+ Christian network) and I also help govern an NDIS-funded home for people with disabilities.

2. What are you most missing during this time of physical distancing?

Coffee catch-ups and dinner gatherings with friends. I love it when people get together in community, especially around food.

3. What are three things you are passionate about?

Life in Jesus, justice for the whole world and creating space for conversations and community on the margins.

4. Why are you involved in Anglicans Together/What do you hope will come from the work of AT?

The Sydney Diocese over many years has become more and more homogeneous and created less space for diverse views. Our national church is currently debating the place of same-sex marriage blessings, and it feels like Anglican belonging has been reduced to your views on just a few "issues". As someone who is female and queer, I feel the harm of these conversations. I hope Anglicans Together will advocate for a broad Anglican church that embodies the Body of Christ that is diverse and where the humble and under-valued are uplifted.

Editorial Policy: We aim to publish a wide range of views and opinions in this newsletter. Publication should therefore not be read as necessarily endorsing or approving a particular view or opinion.